

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 SSM-03 AID-05 OMB-01 /091 W
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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7597
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION SINAI

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IS
SUBJECT: INTRA-PARTY ACRIMONY FOLLOWS COLLAPSE OF DMC'S TALKS WITH
THE COALITION

REF: TEL AVIV 5654

1. ONCE AGAIN THE DMC HAS FORMALLY BROKEN OFF COALITION
TALKS WITH THE GOVERNMENT PARTIES. BY A VOTE OF 61 TO 8
(WITH 10 ABSTENTIONS) THE DMC COUNCIL LAST NIGHT PASSED
A RESOLUTION SAYING THAT THE GOVERNMENT COALITION DID NOT
CREATE CONDITIONS ENABLING THE DMC TO JOIN THE GOVERNMENT.

2. THE COUNCIL VOTE WAS SOMETHING OF AN ANTI-CLIMAX. IT
WAS OBVIOUS FROM THE INCONCLUSIVE AUGUST 1 AND 2
MEETINGS OF THE DMC AND THE PARTIES OF THE COALITION
THAT THE TALKS HAD COLLAPSED. THE PRIMARY STUMBLING
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BLOCK (OSTENSIBLY AT LEAST) WAS THE DIFFERENCE OVER
ELECTORAL REFORM, WITH THE NRP ADAMANTLY OPPOSING THE
DMC PROPOSAL TO DIVIDE ISRAEL INTO 16 ELECTORAL
DISTRICTS (REFTEL). DIFFERENCES ALSO REMAINED OVER
THE DMC'S INSISTENCE ON COMBINING THE HEALTH MINISTRY
WITH THE RESERVED-FOR-DMC SOCIAL BETTERMENT MINISTRY,
BUT THIS WAS SEEN AS AMENABLE TO SOLUTION DEPENDING ON

THE DEPTH OF BEGIN'S INTEREST. THE QUESTION OF CO-
ALITION DISCIPLINE ON RELIGIOUS ISSUES WAS RESOLVED WITH
YADIN'S RETREAT FROM HIS EARLIER INSISTENCE THAT DMC
MKS BE FREE TO VOTE THEIR CONSCIENCE EVEN WHEN RELIGIOUS
MATTERS TURN INTO A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE.

3. IN HIS REPORT TO THE COUNCIL LAST NIGHT, YADIN NOTED
THAT BEGIN HAD TOLD HIM TO PREPARE A MEMORANDUM CON-
CEPTUALIZING THE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF HIS
PROPOSED ROLE AS DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER. HE COMPLAINED,
HOWEVER, THAT HE WAS NEVER ASKED TO PRESENT IT AND
IMPLIED THAT THE LIKUD HAD TOYED WITH HIM. THE POINT
ILLUSTRATES THE POLITICAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL INTER-RELATION-
SHIPS THAT PERVADED THE NEGOTIATIONS. SEVERAL SPEAKERS
AT THE COUNCIL MEETING VOICED BITTERNESS AT BEGIN FOR
"LYING" TO THE DMC, WHILE SOME WERE CRITICAL OF THE
DMC'S NEGOTIATING TEAM. OBSERVERS ATTENDING THE COUNCIL
MEETING NOTED AN ATMOSPHERE OF INDECISION WHICH YADIN
DID LITTLE TO DISPEL - ALTHOUGH HIS EVENTUAL RECOMMENDATION
WAS AGAINST JOINING THE COALITION. HE SEEMED IN-
EFFECTUAL AS A LEADER, AND INDEED HIS RECENT
PERFORMANCE HAS DONE LITTLE TO INSPIRE CONFIDENCE
WITHIN THE DMC.

4. IN A PRESS CONFERENCE TODAY TO EXPLAIN THE DMC
DECISION, MK MEIR ZOREA LASHED OUT AT HIS COLLEAGUES
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MEIR AMIT AND AMNON RUBENSTEIN FOR "TORPEDOING" THE
NEGOTIATIONS. HE CHARGED THAT FROM THE OUTSET THEY
HAD OPPOSED JOINING THE COALITION AND WERE BENT ON
TRYING TO UNDERMINE YADIN'S LEADERSHIP. HE SAID THAT
THEY HAVE NO PLACE IN THE PARTY AND IF THE MAJORITY OF
THE COUNCIL DID NOT SUPPORT HIM (ZOREA), HE WOULD DRAW
THE PROPER CONCLUSIONS. ZOREA'S OUTBURST APPARENTLY
CAUGHT THE OTHER DMC LEADERS BY SURPRISE; YADIN,
FAILING TO SILENCE ZOREA, ATTEMPTED TO SMOOTH OVER
THE INTRA-PARTY CONFLICT BY ASSERTING THAT HE FEARED
NO SPLITS IN THE PARTY. LATER RUBENSTEIN DECLARED THAT
IF IT WERE NOT FOR ZOREA'S PARLIAMENTARY IMMUNITY, HE
WOULD SUE HIM.

5. COMMENT: POINTING TO THE PROMISING BEGINNING OF THE
NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE BEGIN'S U.S. VISIT AND HIS ALLEGED
DISINTEREST FOLLOWING HIS RETURN, OBSERVERS CONTEND
THAT THE DMC HAS INDEED BEEN CONNED BY VETERAN
POLITICIAN BEGIN. AS THE DMC'S IMAGE DECLINES WITH
THE COLLAPSE OF THE TALKS, THE FIRST LONG-ANTICIPATED
FISSURES HAVE APPEARED IN THE PARTY. ZOREA HAS BEEN
VIEWED AS A WEAK LINK SHOULD COALITION TALKS FAIL JUST

AS RUBENSTEIN ON THE OTHER EXTREME SEEMED A PRIME CANDIDATE TO LEAVE THE PARTY HAD THE TALKS SUCCEEDED.

6. AT THIS JUNCTURE WE HESITATE TO WRITE FINIS TO THE POSSIBILITY OF THE DMC EVENTUALLY JOINING THE GOVERNMENT. THERE IS STILL CONSIDERABLE INTEREST ON BOTH SIDES FOR A WIDER COALITION. THE NRP, FOR EXAMPLE, INTENDS IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS TO UNDERTAKE A SOPHISTICATED STUDY OF WHAT ELECTORAL REFORM WOULD MEAN FOR THAT PARTY. IN A PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH US, MK YEHUDA BEN MEIR OF THE NRP INSISTED THAT HIS PARTY, INCLUDING HIS OWN YOUTH FACTION, WANTS THE DMC IN THE COALITION AND THAT THE SAME GOES FOR BEGIN BUT CERTAINLY FOR THE TIME BEING, THE GAME IS OVER.

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Message Attributes

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